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More Naval Fear and Naval Folly.

President Wilson signed the naval appropriation bill on June 30. It carried just under \$141,000,000, and provided among other things for two new Dreadnoughts and permission to the Navy Department to sell the old battleships Mississippi and Idaho to Greece for \$12,000,000, in place of which a third new Dreadnought is to be constructed.

This outcome of the naval conflict in Congress has been sorely disappointing. For the past two years only one new Dreadnought a year has been appropriated, and that with substantial majorities. It was reasonably to be expected that the same result would be secured by the present Congress. Reduced naval appropriation had been demanded by many of the people, as well as by numerous Representatives. The governments and people of the other nations had also been deeply interested in the problem of the arrest of military and naval expenses, and had anxiously

watched for the United States to take the lead in an effective reduction.

In the recent discussion of the bill more than ninety of the Representatives, including a number of most experienced and best-informed men, entered strong protests against the construction of two new first-class battleships, and voted for only one. Among these were both of the floor-leaders, Mr. Underwood and Mr. Mann. But the signing of the naval appropriation bill by the President seems to have turned the nation back, temporarily at least, into darkness, and it will be difficult, we fear, to win again what has been lost, unless the friends of peace and retrenchment shall make redoubled efforts all along the line.

Again and again has it been proved that in the present condition of the United States, its great natural strength, its cordial relations with the other nations, its extraordinary advance in arbitration and international law, there is not a single reason to add another dollar or another gun to the naval equipment. Indeed, many had felt that the nation has reached a condition of over-armament, even of perilous armament, and that reduction ought at once to be begun. What has turned the tide back?

First of all, the militarists have been steadily at work year after year, in Congress and out of it, for largely increased naval armament. Three or four new Dreadnoughts a year have been demanded as the least that could be added to the fleet in conformity with safety. Ugly war-scares have been yearly concocted by them, especially over Japan, whenever the annual naval bill comes on. The new Navy League, growing in strength and noisiness, has tried to frighten the people into believing that the United States Navy is dropping into fifth rank, and will soon be wholly outclassed, even though the thirty-ninth battleship is just to be constructed. The huge, ever-growing armaments of Europe have made many of the people believe that our Republic, if it is to be "great and mighty," must, at whatever cost, follow their example. The terrible Balkan war, the recent Mexican conflict with United States ships, the completion of the Panama Canal, to mention nothing else, have unhinged a lot of men, and resulted in the unfortunate increase in the number of Dreadnoughts.

The mischief can be quickly counteracted, we are sure, if the friends of peace, who are now numbered by millions, in all classes of our American society, will only unite their forces when Congress again assembles in December, and let all their Representatives know that no further increase of the navy is wanted or can be tolerated.